

India eyes 350 airports by 2047

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Dhaka: Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu announced that India aims to increase its airports to 350 by 2047 as part of its vision for a 'Viksit Bharat'.

Speaking at a World Tourism Day event at Vigyan Bhawan, he said the ministry is also working to connect remote and unexplored locations to promote tourism and improve regional connectivity.

Naidu emphasised the government's vision of boosting domestic connectivity and providing better facilities and warm hospitality at airports to welcome foreign tourists, as airports are "gateways to a country".

"Today, we have 157 airports but in the next 20-25 years, when we are going to see the real Viksit Bharat in 2047, we want to increase the number of airports which is 157 today to the tune of 350," he said at the

event hosted by the Tourism Ministry.

He also congratulated the tourism ministry after Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat announced that under the 'Chalo India' campaign, one lakh foreign tourists will be exempted from paying visa fee in coming times.

"4.6 crore travellers landed in India in 2014, and now that we have increased the number of airports from 74 to a staggering 157... we are seeing almost 7 crore people landing in the country today.

And, within these numbers, more than 35 per cent people are arriving for holidays and recreation only," the civil aviation minister in his address said.

He said that his ministry is now connecting many previously "unserved" and "underserved" airports which are close to beautiful landscapes.

He praised the UDAAN scheme of the Narendra Modi government in making air travel closer to the common man.

"We are looking at connecting more of these hinterland locations which are close to these unexplored gems by creating more airports also... We are completely in line with the tourism sector," the Union civil aviation minister added.

He said his ministry is keen to improve seaplane and helicopter connectivity also.

Air travel is the fundamental link that paves the way for foreign tourists' arrivals in India, and "we should work in sync" to leverage the best tourism potential of country, the minister said.

With the aim of using tourism as a major means for sustainable development and especially poverty alleviation, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) had decided to celebrate World Tourism Day on September 27 every year.

World Tourism Day was celebrated for the first time in 1980.

The date marks the anniversary of the adoption of the UN's Statutes in 1970, which paved the way for the establishment of United Nations Tourism, five years later.

Every year World Tourism Day is celebrated with a special theme. This year's theme is "Tourism and Peace".

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